

Feathers by Jacqueline Woodson

<http://us.penguinroup.com/static/rguides/us/feathers.html>

Discussion Questions

Feathers is set in the 1970s. Although the civil rights movement has already happened, there still seems to be a deep divide between black and white in the story.

1. In what ways have times changed from the 70s to today?
2. How have they stayed the same?

“There weren’t white people on this side of the highway. You didn’t notice until one appeared. And then you saw all the brown everywhere. And then you started to wonder.” (p. 16)

3. Are there any parts of your own life that are segregated?
4. Have you ever been in a situation where you were the only one of something (the only person of your color/ religion/gender)? If so, how did this make you feel?

At one point when thinking about her neighborhood, Frannie says, “We have everything we need here.” Yet she also points out that it is an all-black community.

5. Do you think it’s an advantage or disadvantage to live only with people who are like yourself?

Frannie doesn’t seem to mind living the way she does, but her brother thinks about building bridges that would cross the gap between their neighborhood and the white neighborhood.

6. Why?

Trevor is the meanest kid in Frannie’s class, but she is also able to see glimpses of another side of him. She says, “I saw that, even though he was mean all the time, the sun still stopped and colored him and warmed him—like it did to everyone else.” (p 21)

7. Is there anyone in your own life like Trevor?
8. Was there ever a moment when you were able to see his/ her humanity despite his/her mean or difficult ways?